

AREA OF CONCERN 137-1

01/13/09

SAFETY: No

SUBJECT: Minimum fuel advisory

DISCUSSION: IPA representative brought to the members' attention an Anchorage-Louisville flight that ran low on fuel because they had to circle a long time; they were later told that had they declared "Minimum fuel," they might have received priority from ATC. The concern is that pilots are being too conservative with fuel and using this declaration to get priority—it raises the question that if they are receiving priority when declaring "minimum fuel," what is the difference between that and declaring an "emergency." The Executive Director pointed out that perhaps the issue is that the definition of "undue delay" (JO 7110.65, para 2-1-8) is unclear. PDG representative suggested providing examples of undue delays, but due to the many circumstances, it would be impossible to provide a list that would be beneficial. The members moved to add this as an AOC.

138 – Discussion surrounded what declaring "minimum fuel" meant to ATC and to pilots as well as what each should expect upon this advisory. Topics of discussion included: not declaring it if there was enough fuel to reach the alternate destination; asking pilots to state how many air miles are left; assigning a certain amount of flying time to this statement. ADF suggested adding the verbiage to the definition that means that a pilot cannot accept other than already-stated instructions/clearances OR what is currently normal for that airport at that time. AFS-200 had drafted an Advisory Circular, Fuel Planning and Management, in 1993, but it was never published.

139 – Advisory Circular, Performance-based Fuel Planning, sent as an attachment to Pre Read. ADF member sent the following: "A minimum fuel declaration should be made when the usable fuel on board an aircraft reaches the point where the pilot can comply with the current clearance, charted or expected normal approach and land safely but can NOT accept any additional delay or maneuvering, and NO other option remains to avoid a minimum fuel condition." (At the meeting) AFS advised that four airlines are experimenting with the conditions in the AC. There is a meeting November 1 with ICAO to discuss harmonization, and the draft AC will go out for coordination and be published in the next 6 months. It was discussed that there doesn't seem to be a solution from an air traffic control standpoint—only working with airlines will produce a resolution. NASA and others proposed to remove the "minimum fuel" option altogether and only allow an emergency be declared; in turn, the FAA would need to not come down as harshly on flightcrew when they declare "emergency." It was suggested by others that when "minimum fuel" is declared, that a dialogue between pilot and ATC be opened, possibly to state a more specific fuel status. It was tentatively agreed that the phrase, "Common sense and good judgment will determine the extent of assistance to be given in minimum fuel situations" be removed from the note in para 2-1-8. However, this will wait until after further information is gathered.

CURRENT STATUS: Open

ACTION ITEM: PDG will check ICAO's minimum fuel requirements and procedures (this will get sent to the group). The chair will look for ATSAP reports of emergency fuel while NASA/ASRS will look at ASRS reports.

140 –Action: PDG checked ICAO's minimum fuel requirements and procedures and sent out to the group.

Status Update: Information sent to group on 12/30/10.

Action: The chair will look for ATSAP reports of emergency fuel while NASA/ASRS will look at ASRS reports.

Status Update: Danny does not have any ATSAP reports yet. She will see if the research results are in from NATCA. Danny will provide an answer by Monday

141 –AOC 137-1 – Minimum Fuel

Status: (Danny) ICAO different Australia minimum fuel if not enough priority than declare emergency.

Doug Thomas request note in .65 CPC tell pilot common sense and good judgment will determine – delete that sentence. 2/2/2008 Info 08-004 Pilot groups put it through their training. Move to make changes and second. Deferred to #143.